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Approved For Release 2005/04/26 : CIA-RDP79R00904A000300010011-5

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2 July 1956

**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence**  
**SUBJECT: Soviet Heavy Bomber Problem**

1. This will summarize the latest developments in a problem which relates to your April testimony before the Symington Committee, and to your possible obligation to bring that testimony up to date. The significant point is that intelligence received since you testified has not only caused CIA to lower its former estimates of heavy bomber production, but is now also causing AFODN to re-examine its former estimates. As a result, the forthcoming NIE 11-4-56 will show a reduction in present Soviet heavy bomber strength, and may also show a reduction in the strength estimated for mid-1957.

2. In April 1956, you testified before the Symington Committee that current and projected Soviet heavy bomber strength in operational units was as follows:

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	<u>1 April 1956</u>	<u>mid-1959</u>
BISON	45 plus	400
BEAR	45 minus	300

This testimony was based on an agreed updating of the intelligence presented in NIE II-56, dated 6 March.

3. In response to Committee questioning, you also testified as to estimated cumulative production of these aircraft as follows:

	<u>1 April 1956</u>	<u>mid-1959</u>
BISON	100	700
BEAR	?	460

The current production figure for BISON was agreed by ORR and AFOIN. There was a difference of opinion regarding current BEAR production, so no figure was given. The Committee requested that an agreed figure be supplied by the end of May, but this was not done as no agreement could be reached. The mid-1959 production was as agreed in NIE II-56.

4. Basing his testimony on the above estimates, Gen. LeMay later testified in open session that current Soviet strength in BISON's was larger than US strength in B-52's and that if heavy bomber production proceeded at the rates estimated for the USSR

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and planned for the US, by mid-1959 the USSR would have a substantially larger force of heavy bombers than the US would then have. This has been a major point in the Committee's argument that US production must be stepped up.

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[REDACTED] caused a re-examination of all the available evidence by both OER and AFOIN, with OER making drastic reductions in its estimates of current production and AFOIN making minor readjustments.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

two projections of the

way in which Soviet heavy bomber strength would probably build up were written into the draft estimate [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

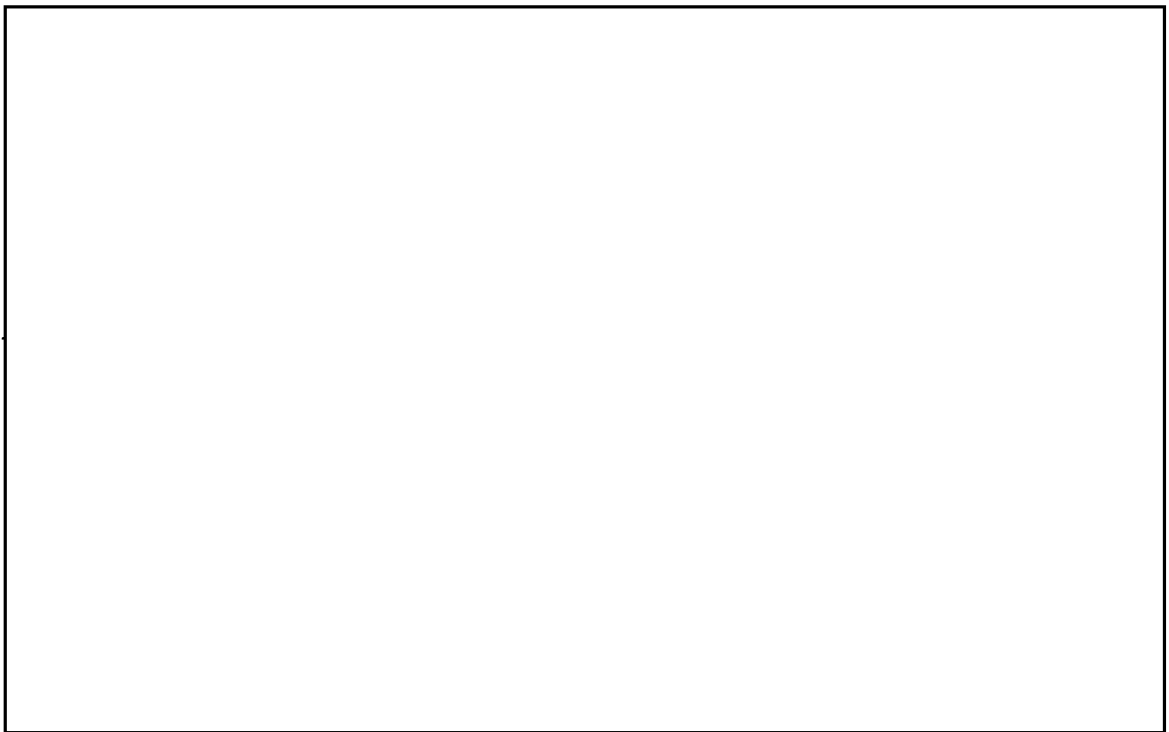
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While these figures showed different rates of buildup, both groups agreed that estimated current and future production rates would support the agreed mid-1959 operational strength estimate.

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7. AFOIN at first indicated that their new estimate would be presented to the Board and IAC representatives on Monday, 2 July, but informed us 29 June that they probably would not be prepared to present their new figures until a week later.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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The IAC target date for NIE 11-4-56 has, therefore, been postponed until 17 July, and it is possible that even this target date will not be met.

SHERMAN KENT  
Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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